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It's hard to prepare for an unknown, but the flu season has already provided helpful practice, state health officials say

ASU student Simon Nguyen, 18, wears a mask for protection on the Tempe campus on Thursday. PATRICK BREEN/THE REPUBLIC

AZ ready for outbreak of new coronavirus?

Stephanie Innes Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

A contagious, deadly disease outbreak is a scenario that Arizona public health officials have already envisioned, but the spread of new coronavirus could pose unexpected challenges.

Public health officials and health providers in Arizona use flu season every year as a way of preparing for a surge in patients and increased need for personal protective equipment for health workers.

But unlike the flu, there's no vaccine against new coronavirus. There's also no known treatment and no cure. And there are a lot of unanswered questions. Public health experts aren't certain whether the novel virus is more virulent than seasonal influenza.

Also, public fear fueled by misinformation that's already circulating could end up overwhelming emergency rooms with people who don't have the virus, hindering a response effort, ex-

See CORONAVIRUS, Page 12A

USA TODAY

Inside: Health officials report the first U.S. case of person-to-person transmission of the new coronavirus. **6A**

Regents' dissent rare; 'no' votes few

Critics: Board is rubber stamp for universities

Rachel Leingang Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

A group of 12 people in Arizona sets tuition rates for college students, controls major construction projects and generally guides higher education for the state.

They're responsible for some of the largest enterprises in Arizona — the three state universities. In total, they oversee more than 200,000 students.

But despite their broad and complex scope of authority, the members of the Arizona Board of Regents rarely show disagreement.

A $192 million building that went $17 million over its expected costs got unanimous approval at a board meeting in the fall. Bonuses for university presidents and higher tuition for students also passed with no dissenting votes at meetings last year.

Amid rancorous political dissent at nearly all levels of government, the regents showcase the opposite: a board that nearly always agrees in public and rarely, if ever, votes down proposals from the universities.

When a regent voted "no" at a meeting in September, it was the first time that happened in at least a year, if not longer.

The dissent came from Lauren L'Ecuyer, a university student on the board of regents, who opposed spending $46 million on a Student Athlete High Performance Center at Northern Arizona University.

Two months later, another regent, Lyndel Manson, voted against a contract extension for NAU President Rita Cheng. While it was a bold move from a regent, Manson didn't explain her op-

See REGENTS, Page 9A

Roberts shields source ID

The nation's top judge exercised his prerogative presiding over the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump on Thursday by declining to relay a question posed by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky.

Paul's attempt to have the name of the whistleblower revealed had been expected, and Chief Justice John Roberts had warned that he would not allow it.

Thursday was the second day of questions and answers.

The House case managers have said that calling witnesses should be added to the proceedings. A vote on that issue is expected today.

Away from the chamber, defense attorney Alan Dershowitz objected to the portrayal of his statements that a president acting in the national interest – though the actions might advance his chances for reelection – should not be subject to impeachment.

See story, Page 6A

Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts reads a question, left, submitted by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., before setting it aside, right, and announcing he would not relay it into the impeachment trial of the president. SENATE TELEVISION VIA AP

FIRST-ROUND LEADER SPORTS, 1B

Wyndham Clark tees off on No. 9 Thursday in the Waste Management Phoenix Open. He took a two-stroke lead at 10-under. DAVID WALLACE/THE REPUBLIC

Patient gets relief on bills

All was well after an 89-year-old Peoria woman traveled to Mexico for some low-cost dental work. She was feeling fine until she received her credit card bill. Facing $10,000 in overcharges, she turned to Call For Action's #HereToHelpAZ. **3A**

27 accused of sex crimes

More than two dozen people were arrested by Valley police in Operation Silent Predator, a crackdown on trafficking and sex crimes involving children. **3A**

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